

Music Hath Charms But Books on Music No

By W. J. HENDERSON.

IN the art of music some secret power exists, compelling its votaries to write and publish strangely dull and uninforming books. Nothing more stupefying than the typical volume of musical biography or history can be conceived, and nothing is more depressing than the representative collection of essays on musical themes. Therefore, when some one publishes a book which either excites laughter or arouses angry passions the wearied reviewer, if not the reader, should be profoundly grateful.

Carl Van Vechten is the name of a critic whose chief principle appears to be that one who writes about music should know nothing about its history, or its technique, since such knowledge can give rise only to pedagogic utterance. There is nothing pedagogic in Mr. Van Vechten's volume entitled *Interpreters and Interpretations* (Alfred A. Knopf). The interpreters who are sketched with literary facility and genuine interest are Fremstad, Farrar, Garden, Chaliapine, Mazarin, Guilbert and Nijinsky. Of no one of them has Mr. Van Vechten anything particularly new or informing to say, but he has written with warm interest and personal quality.

Van Vechtenuities.

Much the better part of his book is that about interpretations. His best essay is *The Problem of Style in the Production of Opera*. Naturally there is much about Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia, without whom writers of Mr. Van Vechten's type are as hopelessly at sea as they are without Erik Satie and Leo Ornstein. But the author has here produced an essay which is both practical and ideal and which is, above all, interesting and suggestive.

Next in importance is the essay entitled *Why Music Is Unpopular*. Curiously enough, Mr. Van Vechten has not proved that it is unpopular, and probably not one reader in ten supposes that it is. But taking that for granted, the essay is delightful. It publishes all its author's views about critics who indulge in flights of poetic rhapsody (such as he himself sometimes takes in writing of Mary Garden) and those ponderous pedagogues previously mentioned. It is a refreshing bit of personal temper.

A large and formidable looking musical book is *The Orchestra and Its Instruments*, by Esther Singleton, published by the Symphony Society of New York. One may be pardoned for regarding this work with some astonishment. There seemed to be no crying need for another book on the orchestra, but if the Symphony Society wished to have one for its own private purposes it might have invited its learned conductor, Walter Damrosch, to write it. The pictures would have been just as good and there would not have been so many lamentable blunders in the text.

The Pianists Talk.

Great Pianist on Piano Playing, by James Francis Cooke (Theodore Presser), is a book of a different type. Mr. Cooke is the editor of the *Etude*, and he has collected in this volume a number of interviews with pianists about their art. Perhaps the most instructive portion of

this interesting book is that written by Mr. Cooke himself. At any rate, he throws some very illuminating rays upon the making of pianists. Not the least brilliant of them is his portrait of a certain Liszt pupil who fell a victim to alcohol and retained his technique when all his mental faculties were in a sea of fog. Some of the pianists represented among the interviews are far from great, but most of them have things to say that were worth recording.

Some years ago M. A. de Wolfe Howe published an important musical monograph on the history of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Such books must in the nature of things be of comparatively small circulation, yet their place is unquestioned. That a similar record of the Philharmonic Society of this city should be made goes without saying. One was put forth by H. E. Krehbiel in 1892 and now on the occasion of the society's seventy-fifth anniversary it issues another, written by James Huneker.

A Philharmonic History.

The lover of music will always read with deep interest of the progress of the Philharmonic Society. It has had its trials and its tribulations, as well as its triumphs, and it brings comfort to the anxious soul to know that its future is safe in the hands of Josef Stransky, who has so perfectly fulfilled all the artistic ideals of its supporters.

Mr. Huneker has told his story briefly and with point. He has given accounts of the coming and going of successive conductors. He has enumerated the works produced by the society. He has also earnestly endeavored to correct the erroneous impression that the organization was placed upon a footing of princely independence by the bequest of the late Joseph Pulitzer. He even goes so far as to assert that the Philharmonic still faces an annual deficit and that it needs continuous help.

This might be sadly discouraging were it not for the well established fact that orchestral organizations all need help. The receipts and the expenditures invariably show a woeful discrepancy. The noblest hero of the orchestral world is the guarantor, the strong man whose bank account stands ready to meet the dread advance of the cost of performance. All who have loved the Philharmonic Society in its historic past will devoutly hope that guarantors will make its future a long stream of glory and that for many years Mr. Stransky's readings of Liszt will give joy and his interpretations of

Brahms be subjects of lively and not unprofitable discussion.

What Mr. Huneker has done for the Philharmonic Raymond Walters of Lehigh University has done for the singers of Bach music in the Lehigh Valley home of Mr. Schwab's steel industry. The *Bethlehem Bach Choir* (Houghton Mifflin Company) is the title of the book, which is handsomely printed and illustrated. The Bach festivals of Bethlehem were well worthy of historical treatment, and while their history is by no means ended, this seems a particularly suitable time for the appearance of this volume.

The festivals now have apparently assumed a permanent shape. They are no longer given in the old Moravian church, which is for some reasons to be regretted, because in that edifice they were surrounded by a peculiarly sympathetic atmosphere. Since leaving it they have lost something of their archaic flavor. Even the imperfect playing of the old amateur orchestra is missed and in the new environment the festivals have acquired an urbanity and a sophistication which it is difficult to associate with the spirit of Bach and the Thomas Church.

Technically the concerts are better than they were in the early days, though even in this they fall short in some respects. It is not easy now to find soloists to sing Bach as the first Bethlehem stars sang him. Some have outlived the days of their power and some—brave Evan Williams, for instance—have lately joined the ranks of the choir of eternal singers of the *Magnificat*. No one has quite filled the place of Gertrude Stein, albeit in Emma Roberts Mr. Wolfe seems to have found a promising successor.

The B minor mass now occupies the two Saturday sessions every year, while Friday gives Bach lovers opportunities to hear works less familiar. Mr. Walters, who is the registrar and assistant professor of English in Lehigh University, has done his work well. His book is interesting and it is accurate. There have been times of trouble in the history of the Bach festivals, and while Mr. Walters has touched these matters with a gentle hand he has faithfully recounted their story.

Excursions in Musical History (H. W. Gray Company), by Helen and Clarence Dickinson, is based on the annual series of historical organ recitals given in the Union Theological Seminary of this city by Mr. Dickinson. There is naturally no attempt at originality in research nor any delving after recondite matter. The purpose of the authors has apparently been to treat certain salient subjects of musi-

cal history such as the music of the organ, the records of the Bach family, and the connection between music and religious movements, which might be regarded as forming the foremost considerations of students of divinity desirous of making an acquaintance with the lyric art of the church. The book is well written and its subject matter has been carefully considered.

JUST PUBLISHED

Robert Ames Bennett's
great war novel



The

Blond Beast

WAR—grim—ghastly—terrible—yet bright with the white glory of heroism, of sacrifice, of indomitable human courage. A story big with romance and love, vibrant with a fine outstanding Americanism. \$1.50 net.

At All Booksellers

Reilly & Britton—Publishers—Chicago

Why the Allies Will Win

Is this war to be determined by old European formulas? Or are there to be new forces controlling victory and defeat—war and peace? If so, victory is already assured for the Allies. What are these new forces?

This is one of the vital issues you will find discussed in

The WINNING OF THE WAR

By Roland G. Usher

Why the Allied victory has been postponed—how Germany's invisible army is maintained—why the original German calculations have failed—the essentials of successful trench warfare—the work of the submarine—the possibilities of the war's ending soon—what victory must mean—these are only a very few of the big questions you will find answered in this book.

Get it to-day at your bookseller's, 5c

HARPER & BROTHERS

Established 1817.

"YOU No Longer Count"

YOU NO LONGER COUNT, translated from the French *Tu n'es Plus Rien* of René Boylesve by Louise Seymour Houghton, is not so much a war novel as a study of the heart and soul of Odette Jacquelin, a young French woman widowed in the early days of the war. It is very different from anything we have had in the way of war books and deals with a problem which is at the centre of every one's heart.

Monsieur Boylesve shows not only how wrong but how impossible it is to devote yourself to individual sorrow when "hu-

manity, which has little remembrance of its own ills and which like a kitten hastens to play with the first ray of sunshine," depends for this sunshine upon each of us.

Odette prefers her personal grief—revels in it in fact, and when she is torn from it by a force greater than herself she resents it and struggles against the larger feeling in vain. She leaves Paris for the seashore where she spent the last happy days with her husband, hoping for solitude in which to nurse her grief, but instead of a deserted pleasure resort she finds a landing place for troops and a hospital for wounded soldiers in which she becomes a nurse. After several years she marries a blinded soldier.

The transformation of Odette from a shallow and selfish society woman to the noble and self-forgetful character which she becomes is only one example of what the war has done for thousands of people and bears out the truth, according to Monsieur Boylesve, that "You no longer count! The individual is dead. Provisionally, but for a time which we cannot estimate, the individual is dead. In fact you no longer have any rights, not even the right to mourn your unending grief. The moment has come to mourn more largely, more grandly. The only hope of a resurrection lies in giving oneself to the common need and losing oneself in love."

YOU NO LONGER COUNT. By RENÉ BOYLESVE. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50

By the Author of "El Supremo"
EDWARD LUCAS WHITE

The UNWILLING VESTAL

A wonderful romance of Rome.

\$1.00 net. Postage Extra. All Bookstores.
E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 5th Ave., N. Y.

THE Trustees of Columbia University, under the provisions of the Joseph Pulitzer Foundation, have just awarded the \$1,000 prize for "the best biography of the year teaching patriotic and unselfish service to the people" to

Benjamin Franklin Self-Revealed By W. Cabell Bruce

Two Volumes. Octavo. Over 1,000 Pages.
\$6.00 Net. (Add 8% for Postage.)

PRESIDENT HIBBEN
of Princeton says:

"It is much the best and most complete work ever written on Franklin. I feel justified in saying this because I had occasion last spring to look up the many works on Franklin preparatory to an address which I had to deliver before the Philosophical Society in Philadelphia."

PRESIDENT ALDERMAN,
Univ. of Virginia, says:

"It is clear that you have done a noble, monumental piece of work and I am very proud for the university's sake that one of its sons has so ably and powerfully interpreted a great American philosopher and statesman. The book belongs in every good library in the world."

New York

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

London

Poilu, Body and Soul

Never have the spiritual and the material been so perfectly portrayed as in this book, written by a cultured French officer of infantry. On the one hand, the reeking mud of the trenches; on the other, a marvelous portrayal of the spiritual emotions, passions and aspirations of the soldiers themselves. It is the new soul of France speaking in "COMRADES IN COURAGE," by Lieut. Antoine Redier.

All Bookstores. Net \$1.40

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO.